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SECOND FEATURE
CAPTAIN ATOM

DHI QAR PROVINCE, IRAQ
--ON YOUR FEET, I SAID.

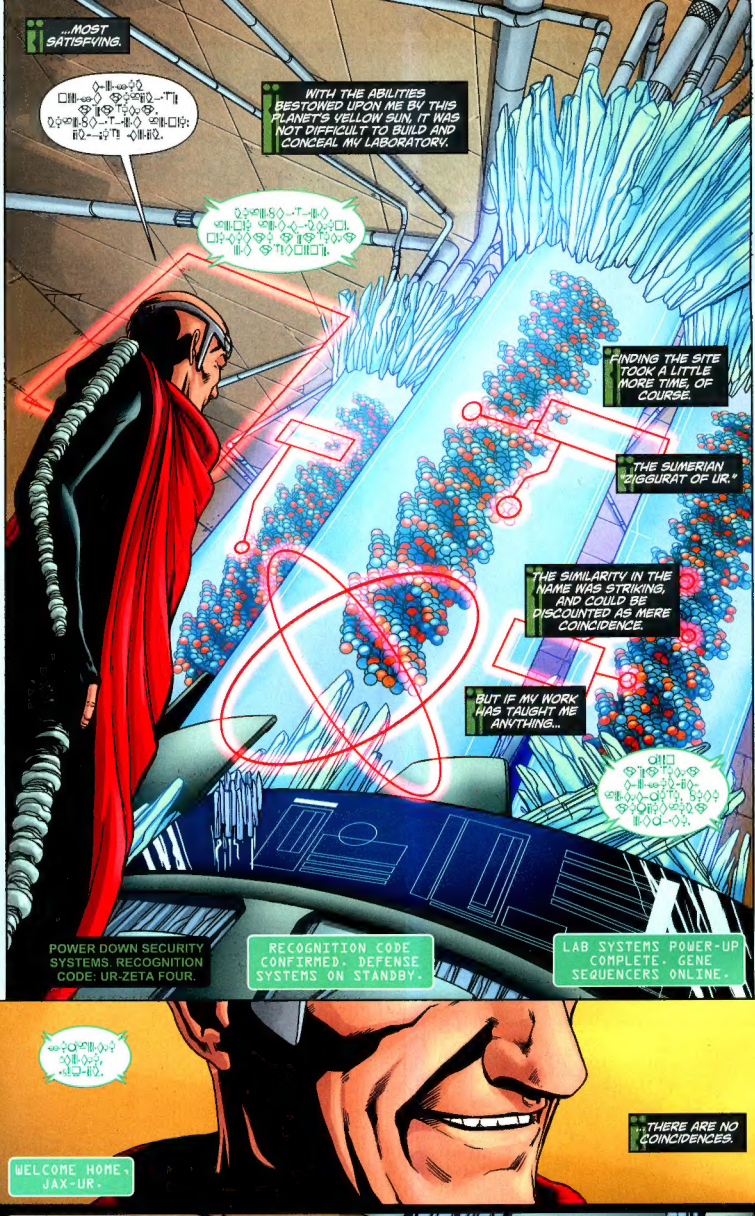
I BELIEVE IN GOD.
MOVE, OR I'LL SHOOT YOU RIGHT HERE.
(--COME ON, GAZZI. THEY'RE STUDENTS. ACADEMICS. THIS IS INSANE--)*
*TRANSLATED FROM ARABIC. --Matt

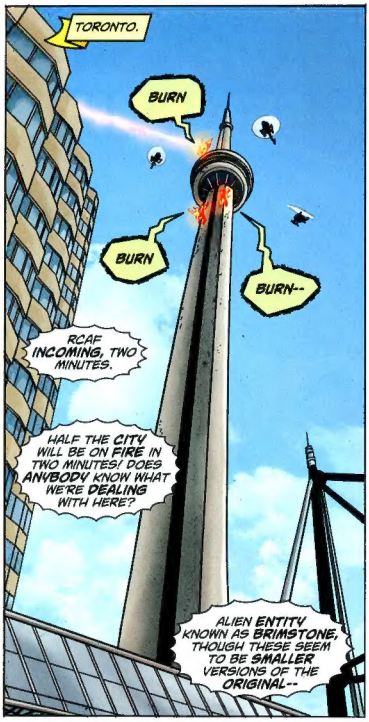
NOT OUT OF SOME FANTASTICAL SENSE OF THE SPIRITUAL, OR BECAUSE DOGMA HAS BEEN POUNDED INTO ME BY SHEER ROTE.
YOU KNOW YOU WON'T GET AWAY WITH THIS--
SHUT UP. SHUT YOUR MOUTH.
FOR GOD'S SAKE, KELLIE, JUST DO WHAT THEY WANT--

THAT WOULD BE ILLOGICAL, AND IF I HAVE A CREED, IT IS EMPIRICISM.
(YOU WANT TO TAKE THAT CHANCE, WAZIR? TRUST THAT THEY'LL NOT REPORT US TO THE AUTHORITIES?)
MOVE, DAMN YOU!
(--YOU KNOW WHAT THEY DO TO GUNRUNNERS--)
(UH, GAZZI? LOOK, UP IN THE SKY--)

EVERYTHING I MUST DO IS BORN FROM THAT SIMPLE FACT: MY GOD EXISTS, AND SPARKS OF DIVINITY HAVE BEEN SCATTERED THROUGHOUT CREATION.
(--NO NO NO. NOT ONE OF THEM.)
(GAZZI, FOR THE LOVE OF GOD--)
(SHUT UP, WAZIR.)
BACK AWAY, SUPERHERO, OR I'LL KILL THEM! YOU HEAR ME?! I'LL KILL THEM!!

EVEN IN THESE TROUBLESOME, MEWLING CREATURES.
(I HEAR YOU.)
THEY'RE SUCH FRAGILE THINGS.
KILLING THEM WOULD REQUIRE NO APPRECIABLE EFFORT.
ON THE OTHER HAND, THEY'RE TROUBLESOME SIMPLY AS PART OF THEIR NATURE.
WITH THE FEW OUNCES OF MEAT THEY CALL A BRAIN NEUTRALIZED...
(YOU'LL KILL THEM.)
(I DON'T CARE.)
--ngh!
JEROME!
...WHAT'S LEFT MIGHT BE USEFUL TO MY WORK, IF ONLY AS A GROWTH MEDIUM.
"WASTE NOT, WANT NOT."
--OH GOD GET AWAY FROM MEEEEE--
Shh.
YOU'RE NOT GOING TO DIE.
HOW DO THESE PROVINCIAL SIMPLETONS PUT IT? OH, YES...
(NO OH NO NO)
BLAM
BLAMBLAM BLAM
(YOU SON OF A B--)
EVERY EXPERIMENT NEEDS LAB RATS, AFTER ALL.
GgGLk
AN UNPLEASANT TASK, BUT A NECESSARY ONE.
AND AFTER HIDING AMONG THE HUMANS FOR SO LONG, I MUST ADMIT...


...MOST SATISFYING.
WITH THE ABILITIES BESTOWED UPON ME BY THIS PLANET'S YELLOW SUN, IT WAS NOT DIFFICULT TO BUILD AND CONCEAL MY LABORATORY.
FINDING THE SITE TOOK A LITTLE MORE TIME, OF COURSE.
THE SUMERIAN ZIGGURAT OF UR.
THE SIMILARITY IN THE NAME WAS STRIKING, AND COULD BE DISCOUNTED AS MERE COINCIDENCE.
BUT IF MY WORK HAS TAUGHT ME ANYTHING...
POWER DOWN SECURITY SYSTEMS. RECOGNITION CODE: UR-ZETA FOUR.
RECOGNITION CODE CONFIRMED. DEFENSE SYSTEMS ON STANDBY.
LAB SYSTEMS POWER-UP COMPLETE. GENE SEQUENCERS ONLINE.
WELCOME HOME, JAX-UR.
THERE ARE NO COINCIDENCES.


TORONTO.
BURN
BURN
BURN--
RCAF INCOMING, TWO MINUTES.
HALF THE CITY WILL BE ON FIRE IN TWO MINUTES! DOES ANYBODY KNOW WHAT WE'RE DEALING WITH HERE?
ALIEN ENTITY KNOWN AS BRIMSTONE, THOUGH THESE SEEM TO BE SMALLER VERSIONS OF THE ORIGINAL--

--A TORONTO HYDRO CREW HIT SOME SORT OF SEEDPOD AND THESE THINGS ERUPTED OUT OF THEM--

LOOK OUT!
--HIT WE'VE BEEN--

BREAK OFF! BREAK OFF!

--OH GOD OH MY GOD--

GOT IT?
WITH ONE HAND BEHIND MY BACK.
DON'T GET COCKY, NIGHTWING.
I'M GOING FOR THE TOWER.
DIVINE SPARK
PART 1
FROM THE MISTS OF LOST KRYPTON, STORIES ARE TOLD OF TWO MYTHICAL HEROES WHO TIME AND TIME AGAIN ROSE TO PROTECT THEIR PEOPLE FROM TYRANNY AND TERROR--
NIGHTWING AND FLAMEBIRD
GREG RUCKA and ERIC TRAUTMANN: Writers
PERE PÉREZ: Artist
JAVIER MENA: Colorist – ROB LEIGH: Letterer
CAFU with SANTIAGO ARCAS: Cover
WIL MOSS: Asst. Editor – MATT IDELSON: Editor
SUPERMAN created by JERRY SIEGEL and JOE SHUSTER

BURN BURN BURN--
LITTLE THING--
--I BURN HOTTER THAN YOU CAN IMAGINE.
WOOSH
NAME'S NIGHTWING. SUPERHERO.
THERE YOU GO, SAFE AS HOMES.
OR IS IT HOUSES? IT'S HOUSES. SAFE AS HOUSES.
KSSSHHHH
MY GIRLFRIEND DID THAT.
UH...
BURN BURN BURN BURN--
YES! I DIDN'T GET IT ALREADY!
HELLO.

GOODBYE.
BURNING FROM THE INSIDE--
BURN.
--LET'S PUT YOUR FIRE OUT--
I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU JUST DID THAT.
WORKED, THOUGH.
YOU KISSED IT!
THAT WAS NOT A KISS.

THAT WAS A KISS.
...YES... YES, THAT WAS--
AH!
CHAKCHAKCHAKCHAKCHAKCHAKCHAKCHAKCHAKA
THEY'RE SHOOTING AT US!
WE JUST DID THE WHOLE SUPERHERO THING--
--NEW COSTUMES, SAVING INNOCENTS, THE WHOLE THING--
781
--AND THEY'RE STILL SHOOTING AT US!
THEY STILL THINK WE'RE BAD GUYS!
I KNOW, CHRIS...
...I KNOW...

DAILY PLANET, METROPOLIS.
--REPORTING FROM TORONTO...
...WHERE THE KRYPTONIANS NIGHTWING AND FLAMEBIRD HAVE JUST ATTEMPTED TO DESTROY THE CN TOWER.
IF SOMEONE DOESN'T TURN THAT OFF RIGHT NOW, I WILL TAKE THE HS I KEEP IN MY DESK FOR JUST SUCH OCCASIONS AS THIS AND SHOOT THE TELEVISION AND ANYONE WHO MIGHT BE IN THE WAY.
WE NOW GO LIVE TO-- KLK THANK YOU.
UHM, EXCUSE ME, MS. LANE? MY NAME'S--
NOT NOW.
--ISABEL, ISABEL GLENN, I WAS WONDERING...
DON'T KNOW DON'T CARE CAN'T TALK.
ON DEADLINE.
...IF YOU'VE SEEN JIMMY...
RON, HOLD DOWN THE FORT FOR ME.
GOTTA TALK TO SOMEONE.

I'M SORRY, WHAT DID YOU SAY YOUR NAME WAS AGAIN?
PERRY WHITE. I'M JIMMY'S BOSS.

OH, RIGHT! YOU'RE "CHIEF"!
THAT'S WHAT HE CALLS ME, YEAH. YOU SAW YOU HAVEN'T SEEN HIM AT ALL?
NOT SINCE MON-EL WAS MURDERED...
...HE'S ALWAYS WORKING, YOU KNOW, SO I THOUGHT HE WAS MAYBE ON ASSIGNMENT. BUT HE'S NOT ANSWERING HIS PHONE, NOT EVEN TEXTS.

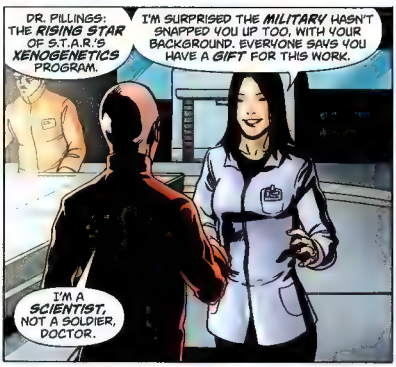
AND WHEN I WENT BY HIS APARTMENT, THERE WAS MAIL STICKING OUT FROM UNDER THE DOOR...

...I TRIED TO GET INSIDE, I THOUGHT MAYBE SOMETHING HAD HAPPENED TO HIM, BUT HIS LANDLORD WOULDN'T LET ME IN...
IT'S NOT LIKE WE'VE BEEN GOING OUT THAT LONG, BUT...I'M GETTING REALLY WORRIED ABOUT HIM.

HAVE YOU HEARD FROM HIM?
I HAVEN'T, NO.
I'LL SEE WHAT I CAN FIND OUT FOR YOU, MISS GLENN.

S.T.A.R.
--YOU CAN'T BE SERIOUS, DR. PILLINGS.
WE ARE STRETCHED TO THE BREAKING POINT, HERE. HALF MY STAFF HAVE MOVED OVER TO MILITARY LABS.
SHOWING UP ON MY DOORSTEP WITH HAZARDOUS OFFWORLD TECH IS NOT FILLING ME WITH DELIGHT, EITHER.
KRYPTONIAN ATTACK IN TORONTO
I APOLOGIZE, DR. HOSHI. S.T.A.R. TORONTO HAS HAD SIMILAR DIFFICULTIES OF LATE.
BUT YOUR FACILITIES ARE THE BEST EQUIPPED FOR EXAMINING THE TORONTO... MANIFESTATION.
ADD THE KRYPTONIANS TO THE MIX, AND, WELL...
AND THE MILITARY STEPS IN.
EXACTLY.
WE'RE IN YOUR SECURE LAB NOW, DOCTOR. I COULD USE YOUR INPUT.
...VERY WELL. I'LL BE DOWN IN A MOMENT.
COMPUTER: SECURITY ACCESS, CODE HOSHI SUNSHINE 412.
...SECURE LAB ACCESS GRANTED: HOSHI, KIMIYO.
FOR ALL THEIR FLAWS, THE HUMANS POSSESS AN ADMIRABLE WORK ETHIC.

--POWER FEED TO THE STASIS FIELD--
--FLUCTUATING A BIT. LOCKING DOWN SYSTEM--
--DOWN 20% FROM LAST READING--
--SPECTROGRAPH INCONCLUSIVE. NO IDEA WHAT THE MATERIAL IS--
--COMPARING TO DATABASE. NEGATIVE RESULT. MARTIAN; DURLAN; THANAGARIAN; COLUAN--
SWARMING AND SCURRYING, LIKE ANTS IN SERVICE TO THEIR QUEEN.


DR. PILLINGS: THE RISING STAR OF S.T.A.R.'S XENOGENETICS PROGRAM.
I'M SURPRISED THE MILITARY HASN'T SNAPPED YOU UP TOO. WITH YOUR BACKGROUND. EVERYONE SAYS YOU HAVE A GIFT FOR THIS WORK.
I'M A SCIENTIST, NOT A SOLDIER, DOCTOR.

FAIR ENOUGH. WHAT ARE WE LOOKING AT HERE?
SOME KIND OF TECHNO-ORGANIC SEEDPOD. IT REACTS TO A PRESET TRIGGER AND DEPLOYS THE CREATURES THAT ATTACKED TORONTO.
AND THE TRIGGER? KINETIC? CHEMICAL?
NO. IT SEEMS TO REACT TO SPECIFIC ENERGY WAVE-LENGTHS.

SOMETHING IN THE VISIBLE LIGHT SPECTRUM, DOCTOR.
YOU SEE WHY I BROUGHT IT TO YOU?
CONTROL THE QUEEN, AND YOU RULE THE NEST.

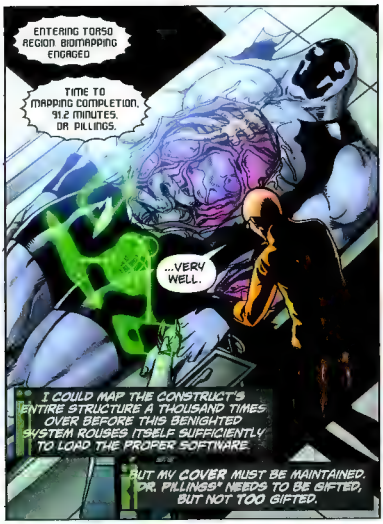
...NO, HIS MOTHER'S SISTER, ACTUALLY.
UNCLE, I SEE. HE'S, UM...
...HE'S PAST DUE ON HIS RENT.
I'LL WRITE YOU A CHECK BEFORE I GO.
THAT WOULD BE FINE.

ODD MAN OUT, OLSEN
N/E O
JSE O
WHAT'VE YOUR GOTTEN YOURSELF INTO, KID?

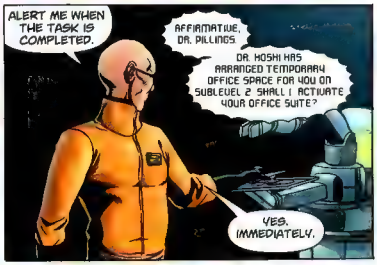
HONG KONG.
...WHAT YOU CAN GET WITH A HANDFUL OF UNCUT DIAMONDS...
...KARA WAS RIGHT. WE TOTALLY NEEDED A PLACE OF OUR OWN.
THARA, CHECK OUT THIS VIEW...
...I CAN SEE THE FISHERMEN SLEEPING ON THEIR JUNKS IN THE HARBOR...
DONE
ALL RIGHT, COME TAKE A LOOK...
...TIME TO REVIEW OUR PROGRESS...
TOR-AN
JAX-UR
NADIRA VA-DIM
AZ-REL
QUEX-UL
CAR-VEX
...TOR-AN, JAX-UR, NADIRA, AZ-REL, QUEX-UL AND CAR-VEX...
...GENERAL ZOD'S SLEEPER AGENTS HIDING HERE ON EARTH.
TOR-AN IS DEAD, KILLED BY URSA AFTER WE CAPTURED HIM.
NADIRA AND AZ-REL VANISHED WHILE WE WERE PURSUING THEM, BEFORE WE WERE FRAMED FOR MON-EL'S MURDER.
I THINK WE CAN SAFELY CONCLUDE THAT THEY HAVE BEEN CAPTURED OR KILLED BY THE HUMANS.
WHICH LEAVES JAX-UR, QUEX-UL AND CAR-VEX.
AND NO LEADS ON WHERE TO EVEN BEGIN LOOKING FOR THEM.
JAX-UR
QUEX-UL
CAR-VE
DOESN'T THE FLAMEBIRD KNOW?
WHAT?
DOESN'T SHE... TELL YOU, OR SOMETHING?

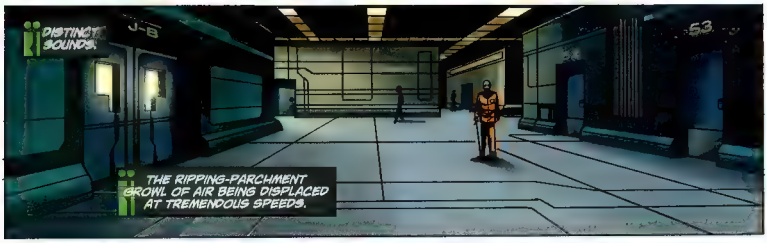
IT...IT DOESN'T WORK LIKE THAT.
SHE DOESN'T REALLY... TALK TO ME...
BUT SHE'S YOU. YOU'RE HER. AREN'T YOU?
!ad.
I'M HER SHELL, THAT'S ALL.
BUT...SHE KISSED ME.
IF THAT'S NOT YOU...
SHE WASN'T KISSING YOU, CHRIS...
...SHE WAS KISSING THE NIGHTWING.
SHE WAS KISSING HER MATE.
BUT YOU DON'T BELIEVE YOU'RE HIM, DO YOU?
...I'M SORRY, THARA...
...I DON'T.

I'M NOT HIM. I CAN'T BE HIM. I'M NOT EVEN A TRUE KRYPTONIAN. I'M A...I'M A MUTANT...
...SOME FREAK BORN IN THE PHANTOM ZONE...
YOU ARE WRONG.
YOU ARE PERFECT.
AND I LOVE YOU.
THARA...
...I--
NHNNNNN
CHRIS!
HHNNNNG
NAAAAHHH
KRSSSH


ENTERING TORSO REGION BIOMAPPING ENGAGED
TIME TO MAPPING COMPLETION. 91.2 MINUTES. DR PILLINGS.
...VERY WELL.
I COULD MAP THE CONSTRUCT'S ENTIRE STRUCTURE A THOUSAND TIMES OVER BEFORE THIS BENIGHTED SYSTEM ROUSES ITSELF SUFFICIENTLY TO LOAD THE PROPER SOFTWARE.
BUT MY COVER MUST BE MAINTAINED. DR. PILLINGS' NEEDS TO BE GIFTED, BUT NOT TOO GIFTED.

NECESSARY, BUT PROFOUNDLY IRRITATING.
ANNOYING ENOUGH THAT I ALMOST DIDN'T NOTICE.


ALERT ME WHEN THE TASK IS COMPLETED.
AFFIRMATIVE, DR. PILLINGS
DR. HOSHI HAS ARRANGED TEMPORARY OFFICE SPACE FOR YOU ON SUBLEVEL 2 SHALL I ACTIVATE YOUR OFFICE SUITE?
YES. IMMEDIATELY.

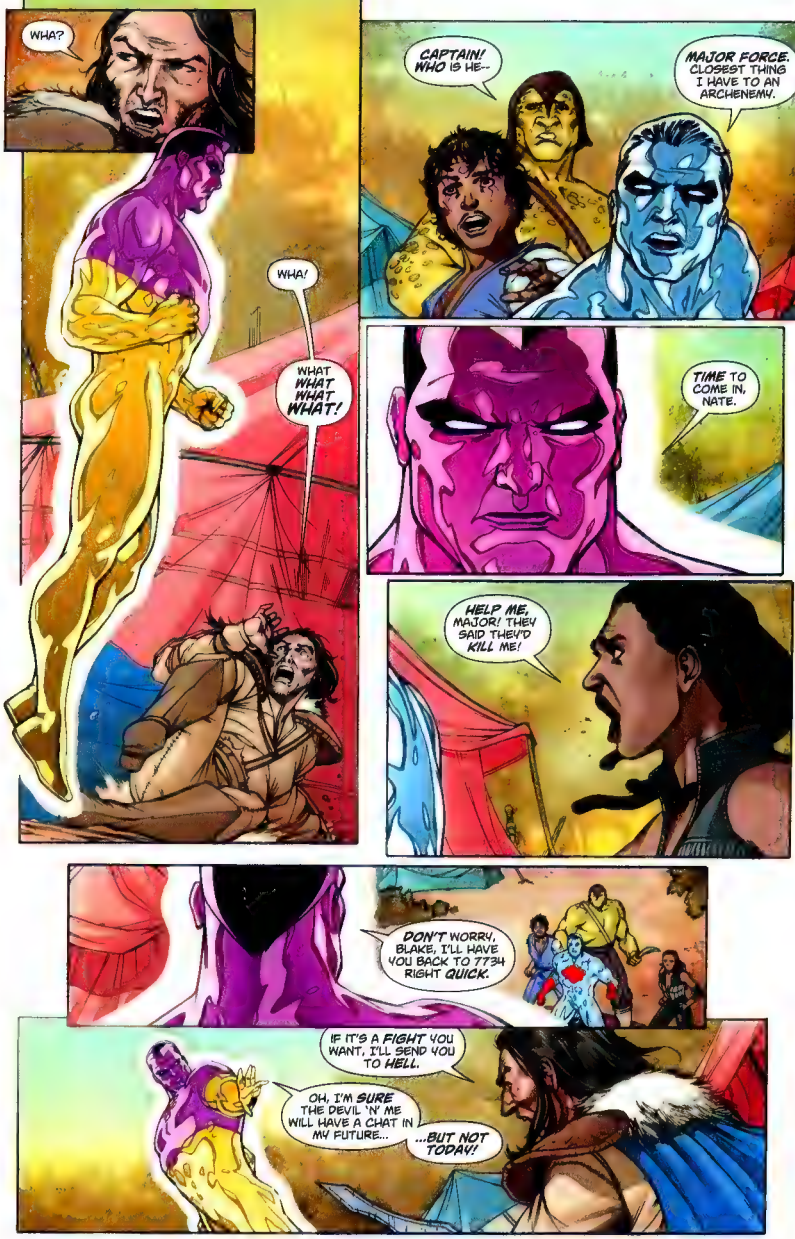

DISTINCT SOUNDS.
J-8
53
THE RIPPING-PARCHMENT GROWL OF AIR BEING DISPLACED AT TREMENDOUS SPEEDS.

THE STEADY, KETTLE-DRUM THUMPING OF CARDIAC MUSCLES.
COMPUTER SYSTEM: ENABLE PRIVACY SUITE.
DR PILLINGS

DISABLE ALL MONITORING AND RECORDING SYSTEMS. AUTHORIZATION CODE: DIVINITY SEVEN-SEVEN.
AUTHORIZATION CODE ACCEPTED. PRIVACY SUITE ENGAGED
THE RUSTLE OF AIR BEING PISTONED FROM POWERFUL LUNGS.

EVIDENCE THAT MY PLANNING AND DISCIPLINE WILL SOON YIELD RESULTS.
A MOMENT TO SAVOR.
ALL THE PIECES IN PLACE. THE GEARS MESHING WITH PRECISION.
I PREDICT THE PHONE CALL WITHIN .0001 OF A SECOND.
DISPLAY CURRENT GENEMAP. FOCUS ON SEQUENCE GAPS.
BA-DEET
INCOMING CALL: DR KIMINO HOSHI
I'M SORRY TO DISTURB YOU, DR. PILLINGS, BUT I HAVE A SITUATION THAT REQUIRES YOUR ASSISTANCE...
...AND YOUR DISCRETION.
BY ALL MEANS, DOCTOR. YOU'VE CERTAINLY PIQUED MY CURIOSITY.
YOU'RE ONE OF THE BEST XENOBIOLOGISTS IN THE FIELD, DR. PILLINGS...

...SO BEFORE THIS 18-YEAR-OLD BOY DIES OF OLD AGE...
...WE REALLY NEED YOUR HELP.
DR. PILLINGS
YES...
...I SHOULD SAY YOU DO.
I BELIEVE IN GOD.
COME IN. LET'S SEE WHAT I CAN DO FOR YOU.
AND THERE ARE NO COINCIDENCES.
TO BE CONTINUED
AND NOW... CAPTAIN ATOM

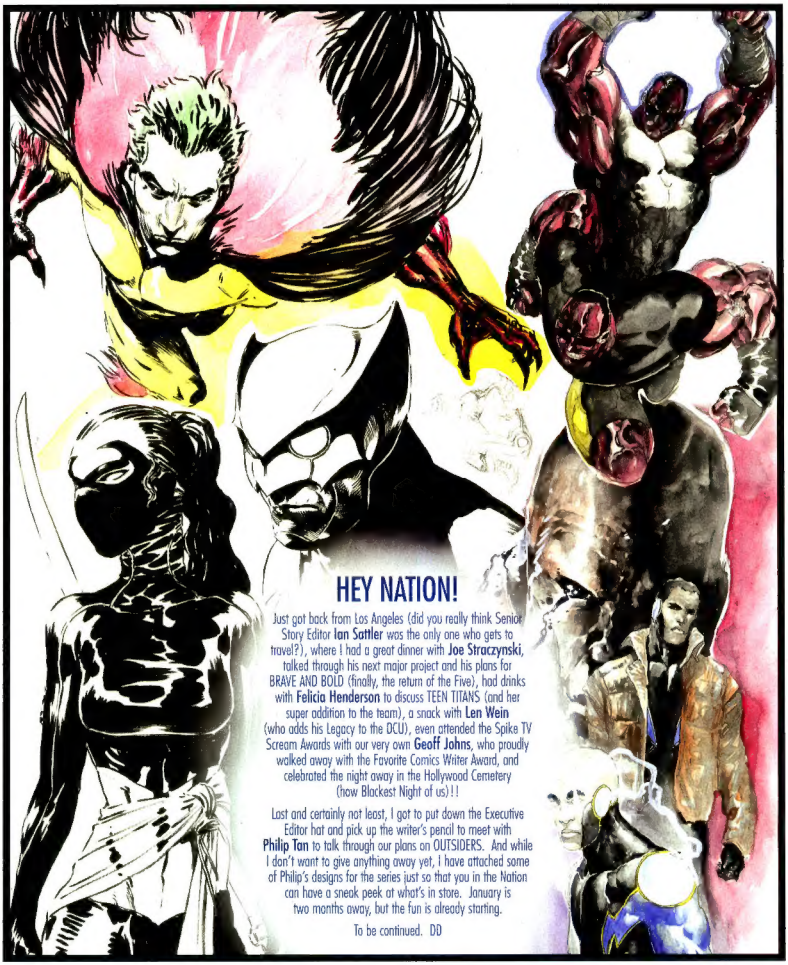

WHA?
WHA!
WHAT WHAT WHAT WHAT!
CAPTAIN! WHO IS HE--
MAJOR FORCE. CLOSEST THING I HAVE TO AN ARCHENEMY.
TIME TO COME IN, NATE.
HELP ME, MAJOR! THEY SAID THEY'D KILL ME!
DON'T WORRY, BLAKE, I'LL HAVE YOU BACK TO 7734 RIGHT QUICK.
IF IT'S A FIGHT YOU WANT, I'LL SEND YOU TO HELL.
OH, I'M SURE THE DEVIL 'N' ME WILL HAVE A CHAT IN MY FUTURE...
...BUT NOT TODAY!

KEEP BACK, YOU IDIOT! HE'LL TURN YOU TO ASH!
COME PEACEFULLY, CAPTAIN, LET'S NOT TURN THIS INTO A FIGHT.
WAIT. WHAT AM I SAYING?
THIS IS BETTER... SO MUCH BETTER...
ALL THE WHILE--ALL THE TIMES OUR PATHS HAVE CROSSED-- I'VE HATED YOU.
YOU THINK I FEEL DIFFERENT? YOU'RE A THUG. A KILLER.
YEAH, WELL I'M NOT ALONE UP HERE GUILTY OF THAT.
"YOU KILLED ME. REMEMBER 'MONARCH'? OR THOUGHT YOU DID."
MONARCH NO MORE!
!!!
GO, NATASHA! GET GONE!
NO, I BETTER STAY. IF THE MAJOR WINS, MAYBE I CAN DO SOMETHING TO STOP HIM KILLING ALL OF YOU.
THAT'S OUR PROBLEM! IF YOU STAY UNDERCOVER WITH 7734, THE RESISTANCE HAS A CHANCE AT SOMETHING.
YOU HEARD HIM! GO!
WITHOUT THAT, WE'RE JUST RABBLE IN THE WOODS.
I'VE BEEN ORDERED TO BRING YOU BACK, CAPTAIN.
YEAH, GOOD LUCK WITH THAT.
NO, YOU DON'T GET IT...

...I MEANT "BRING YOU BACK!"

NOW.
YOU'RE OUTGUNNED.
YOU FACE AN OVERWHELMING FORCE OF WEAPONRY DESIGNED SPECIFICALLY TO DEFEAT AND CONTAIN YOU.
"VICTORY IS IMPOSSIBLE."
OH, DON'T GET ME WRONG, NATE, I'D LOVE TO SEE YOU TRY AND FAIL.
BUT MY ORDERS ARE TO RETURN THE U.S. GOVERNMENT'S PROPERTY--THAT BEING YOU--
"--WITH AS LITTLE DAMAGE TO IT AS POSSIBLE. SO FOR BOTH OUR SAKES..."
...JUST HOLD OUT YOUR HANDS AND LET US PUT THE CUFFS ON YOU.

HELLO, CAPTAIN ATOM.
BOY, IT SURE IS WARM TODAY.
CAPTAIN ATOM
CHAPTER FIVE
JAMES ROBINSON & GREG RUCKA -PLOT
ROBINSON-SCRIPT * CAFU-PENCILLER * BIT-INKER
SANTIAGO ARCAS -COLORIST * ROB LEIGH-LETTERER
WIL MOSS-ASST. EDITOR * MATT IDELSON-EDITOR



HEY NATION!

Just got back from Los Angeles (did you really think Senior Story Editor **Ian Sattler** was the only one who gets to travel?), where I had a great dinner with **Joe Straczynski**, talked through his next major project and his plans for BRAVE AND BOLD (finally, the return of the Five), had drinks with **Felicia Henderson** to discuss TEEN TITANS (and her super addition to the team), a snack with **Len Wein** (who adds his Legacy to the DCU), even attended the Spike TV Scream Awards with our very own **Geoff Johns**, who proudly walked away with the Favorite Comics Writer Award, and celebrated the night away in the Hollywood Cemetery (how Blackest Night of us)!!

Last and certainly not least, I got to put down the Executive Editor hat and pick up the writer's pencil to meet with **Philip Tan** to talk through our plans on OUTSIDERS. And while I don't want to give anything away yet, I have attached some of Philip's designs for the series just so that you in the Nation can have a sneak peek at what's in store. January is two months away, but the fun is already starting.

To be continued. DD

DC NATION

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Printed by World Color Press, Inc., Montreal, QC, Canada. 11/04/09.

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